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Cover page "d"

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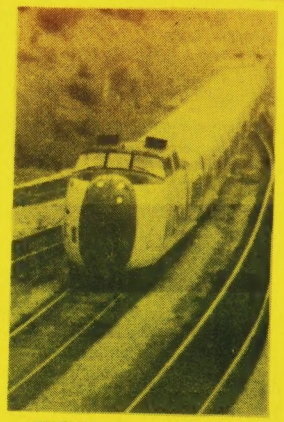

new issue of Rail Travel News

Cover page "a"

DO ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORT PASSENGER RAIL?

By A. E. Wolf

During the past fifteen or so years I have belonged (and have ceased to belong) to a number of environmental organizations, including Friends of the Earth, Sierra Club, Greenpeace and the Natural Resources Defense Council. While some of these organizations pay passing reference to the advantages of rail passenger service, most concentrate their efforts on other environmental issues. Since the current Amtrak crisis began (fall of 1994) and long before that, Amtrak has not even been mentioned in correspondence received from organizations to which I still belong. Not even after the massive cuts in service were announced last December has there been any mention of Amt rak (or mass transit for that matter).

To test their reactions, in Jan 1995 I wrote to organizations in which I still hold membership, which include Greenpeace, Natural Resources Defense Council, Union of Concerned Scientists (I'm not a member, but I completed one of their lengthy surveys I received by mail). In my letters I stated that uncontrolled automobile use/proliferation was a major cause of environmental problems including urban sprawl, air and water pollution, acid rain, loss of forests and farmland, and a host of items resulting in degradation of the environment and quality of life. To date I have received just one reply, from Greenpeace, thanking me and indicating that while rail passenger service is not high on their priority list for 1995, they would certainly consider my views next year. .The others keep sending me "environmental alerts" of many kinds but do not even mention Amtrak or mass transit.

My main reason for joining the Natural Resources Defense Council in 1993 was because their "Priority No. 1" (for 1993) included "investing $5 billion in urban transit" and "$4 billion in intercity passenger rail networks and new high speed rail systems." NRDC's support for rail and transit was short-lived, however, as it didn't appear in their year-end report for 1993 nor has it appeared in any of their priorities since.

I have not heard of any of these organizations lobbying Congress in protest of cuts in Amtrak funding or of mass transit funding cuts. I'm frustrated by the lack of action by these groups, many of which have large membership rolls and considerable political clout. I will certainly remember their lack of action on this issue when membership renewal time approaches. Perhaps some of them perceive us as only railfans interested only in railroading's past. If so, we certainly need to get a different message across. Someof you may not consider yourselves "environmentalists", but the truth of the matter is that we are the real environmentalists, for we support transportation alternatives which are vastly less damaging to the environment than the present auto/airline-centered modes.

TWENTY YEARS AGO IN RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

"...while nearly everybody is talking about mass transit, no one is really sure what to do about it. And, for the moment, Californians need not beat their ignition keys into bus tokens. The reality is that, while the idea of freeways has fallen into disfavor for economic, environmental and esthetic reasons, we continue to depend on them. Freeways have a mystique, and some of the millions of cultists who make their daily pilgrimages on these great, gray carpets acknowledged, in a recent Los Angeles Times article, that getting there is certainly half the fun. In any case, for better or worse, freeways are solidly embedded in cultural bedrock. They very nearly constitute a lifestyle in themselves for Southern Californians, who spend 10 percent of their timebetween on-ramps and exits."

—Jeff Levine in California Journal, July 1975, quoted in RTN 112 (July, 1975).

"It's a national disgrace when the BROADWAY LIMITED— the only train between New York and Chicago—makes such a poor showing [in RTN's train-rating survey]. I know its on-time performance is—ZERO!

"Good service on this as well as the old CENTURY route through Cleveland would be supported by plenty of passengers. The potential is certainly there. Possibly Amtrak feels it might be TOO successful. Otherwise, why do they add routes and duplicate service through states (West Virginia) whose population is less than that of Greater Cleveland?

"There are more than enough travelers each day between New York and Chicago to fill 8-10 trains in each direction just from unhappy air and bus travelers alone. Both the BROADWAY and CENTURY routes are a natural, especially for overnight travel, if they could just stick to the 17-hour schedule of 30-40 years ago."

—Thomas J. Healey, Cleveland, in letter to RTN published in issue 112 (July, 1975).

(contined on inside rear wrapper)

cover page "b"

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RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

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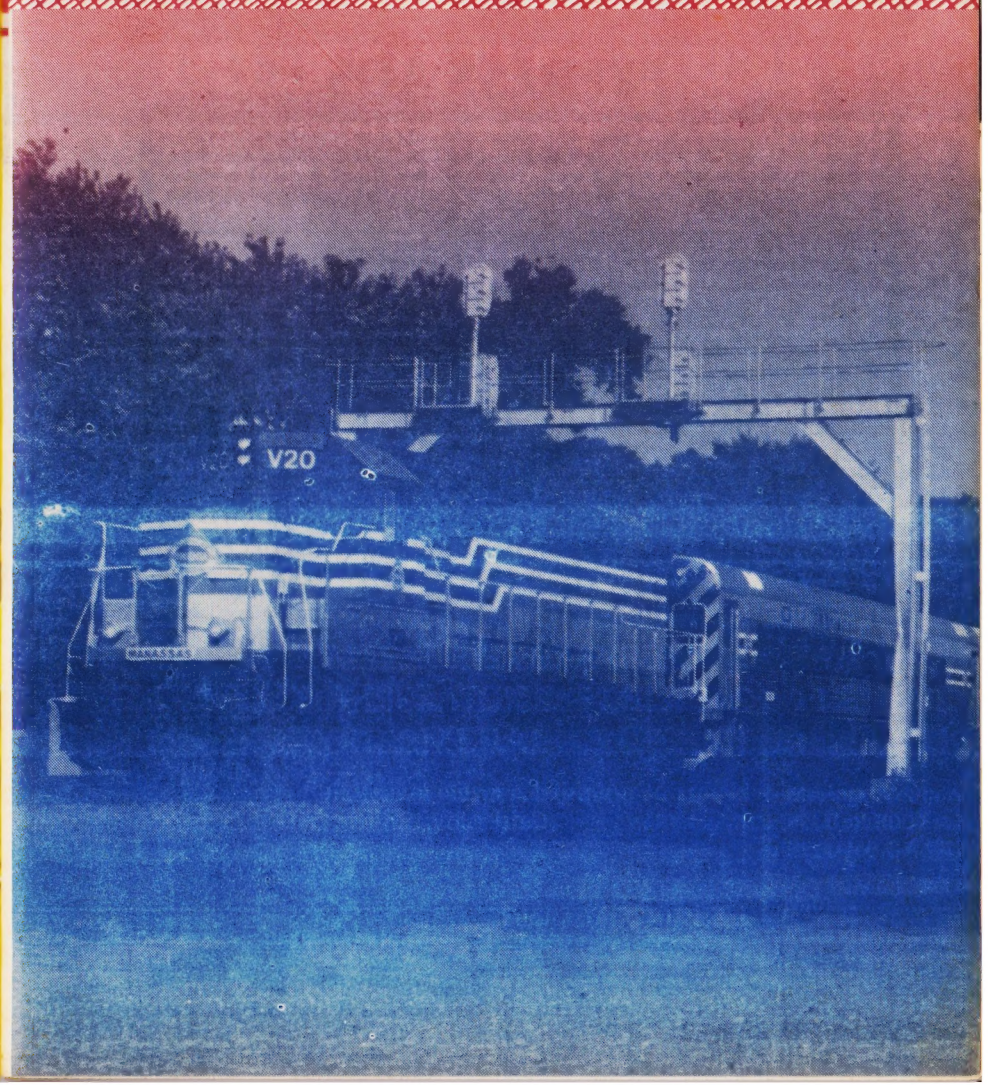
NEWS THROUGH
SEPTEMBER 16, 1995



ON THE COVER

(Front cover:) A Virginia Railway Express commuter train heads southbound on Norfolk Southern's former Southern Railway main at Burke VA on an afternoon run to Manassas VA on July 3, 1995. VRE diesel no. V20, a Morrison-Knudsen rebuild, leads a six-car consist. VRE has recently purchased bilevel equipment, and it will be phased into operation as soon as the clearances in the Third Street Tunnel, which leads into Washington Union Station, have been increased. Photo by Alex Mayes.

(Rear cover:) SAN JOAQUIN train 716 nears the Berkeley station on time on Sep 8 with red & silver Santa Fe engine 680, Amtrak F40 392 and four Horizon cars. The Amtrak loco of train 713 of the previous day had suffered an "accident" and the Santa Fe unit evidently substituted on a later run from Bakersfield and was being returned on this date. Train 713 of Sep 7 was annulled. RTN photo.

EXPRESS ADS

AMTRAK—THE EARLY YEARS: Not a miniseries, but dozens & dozens of the earliest issues of RTN, from v.1 no.9 (4/71)-v.12 no.21 (12/82). Not selling my own personal copies, but extra issues & some from a relative. Most but not all issues; there are some gaps. A list is available for a SASE. Approx. 200 issues total, $25 + $5 shipping. P. Rayton/PO Box 65611/L.A., CA 90065. (213) 256-1287.

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RTN WILL PUBLISH ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE IN DECEMBER.

* * *

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EAST COAST REPORT

The BROADWAY LIMITED at Harrisburg PA on August 15, sixteen days before Amtrak's discontinuance of that historic train. Photo by A. E. Wolf.

LONG LIVE THE VERMONTER

by Bob Underwood

On a lovely clear Friday, Sep 2, I along with 22 others in a group of New York Division of the Railroad Enthuaiasts boarded car 44980 on the combined MOHAWK/ADIRONDACK. We were delighted to find a roomy Metroliner Service car, much better than the standard Amfleet in the Northeast.

I took a window seat on the left so I could view the Hudson River. For me and others this was our first ride over the Empire Connection between Penn Station and Spuyten Duyvil. Our departure from New York's Penn Station came at 10:37am, two minutes late. Once out of the tunnel and on a curve, I could see that we had one of the new Genesis engines up front.

I had left from New Haven at 6:57am after an early breakfast at home, and had eaten again at the new McDonald's on the LIRR level in the station, so I was properly fortified and was not concerned with the late opening of the cafe. It was about 11:45 when it finally opened. Numerous complaints were heard regarding this. Why can't it be open upon departure or very soon thereafter?

The ride up the Hudson was beautiful, and my seatmate enroute to Albany was able to answer a few questions that I had, as he knew the area better than I, but at one point I was the answer man, so we helped each other.

At Albany we arrived on the track farthest from the station five minutes late at 1:20pm. This was a smoke, stretch, visit the station or photo stop. For several of us it was the latter. Up front we found brand new AMD110 no. 702, which uncoupled and went up into the yards. An F40 came down and tied on to our train. Before our departure we were able to photograph train 286, the EMPIRE STATE EXPRESS departing at 1:40 for New York. We left Albany at 1:50pm, on time.

This was to be my first ride on the CP/D&H. My last ride was back in D&H days on Amtrak. I missed the "Susquehanna era." At Albany I was able to change my seat to the right side to see Lake Champlain. What a beautiful ride on this Kodachrome day!

The sandwich and service in the dinette were fine. We moved right along until we neared Whitehall, where we stopped on the siding by the yards south of the station to wait for our counterpart, train 68, which was late. This was explained by the crew on the P.A. Train 68 finally passed at 3:42pm (scheduled to depart Whitehall station at 3:11). We had been only six minutes late at Fort Edward but were 29 minutes late leaving Whitehall. We were to take the 5:20pm ferry, but that looked iffy. The next and last ferry was at 6:30pm.

Northward we proceeded, twisting and turning along the shore of Lake Champlain. We passed WD cabin at Wadhams and were again in a siding. Soon we passed a southbound CP freight with three CP and one Milwaukee Road units. We came to a stop at 5:12, and after the rear of the freight passed we began to move at 5:16. At 5:29 we passed Willsboro station, no longer a stop, but still there with its Amtrak station sign.

Soon we were treated to spectacular views of Willsboro Bay and the lake from high above lake level. In some places the tracks sit on a shelf that has been chopped into the rocks, and it is straight down several hundred feet to the water. We arrived at the new Port Kent "station" at 5:50, about 50 minutes late. What a nice little platform and shelter. I can remember when this area was nothing but rubble and the "platform" was the road at the grade crossing. There wasn't even a station sign then!

(continued on page 22)

I WENT TO New Haven station on Sep 10 to see the Sunday VERMONTER, train 57, and wound up seeing five trains in just 35 minutes.

I arrived at the station to find Amfleet on track 9. I had left my timetable home, so didn't know what train it was, and car knockers couldn't tell me on this first day of new schedules. The consist of the train on track 9 at 6:50pm was AEM7s 907 & 902, coach 21092, cafe 20052, and coaches 21141, 21164 and 21133. The first three cars were from train 235, the last run of the CAPE CODDER from Hyannis, while the two rear cars were train 475 from Springfield. This train pulled out to the yards to make room for train 157, the GOTHAM EXPRESS, which arrived 20 mins late. Train 157's consist was F40 265, coaches 21107, 21210 & 21200, and cafe 20025, and coaches 21110 and 21158. After the F40 was removed, the combined 235/457 coupled to the head end. The train departed at 7:15, 25 mins late.

While 157 was still in the station on track 9, train 57, the VERMONTER came down track 9 with F40 203 pulling the train cab car first. It had the same consist as train 56 on the previous day, but the F40 was different. This train left 2mins late right behind the 235/457/157 combo.

The car knockers were relieved that everything had finally departed. One then yelled, "Hey, we can't do yet. 177's comin'!" Train 177, the SENATOR, was 3mins late at 7:23. It had F40 413 (off at New Haven), AEM7 941 on; coaches 21285, 44271, 21182, 21211, 21135 and club car 20138.

* * *

On the previous day, Sep 9, the last run of the combined trains 55 VERMONTER and 172 YANKEE CLIPPER arrived New Haven with AEM7s 942 & 953 off at New Haven, 1801 VERMONTER baggage car (one checked bag was unloaded), coach 44270, dinette 48223, coaches 44201 & 44154, cab car 9640, coaches 21106, 21219, 21160, 21054 & 21068 and club car 20124. The door at the head end of the third rear car was on the platform, but the rest of the car and the two rear cars were completely off the platform. F40 no. 228 tied on to the train and the cut was made between the cab car and 21106, and the forward portion of the train became train 55, which left New Haven 5mins late. F40 no. 413 tied on to the rest of the train, becoming no. 172, which also left 5mins late.

After Sep 9 the VERMONTER and YANKEE CLIPPER run separately.

* * *

SHORE LINE EAST riders face fare increases up to 53%. Under the plan, a Branford-New Haven monthly ticket would go from its current $32 to $49 in November, then to $56 next June. These fares include free rides on the commuter connection bus in New Haven, but are still steep. A hearing in Guilford on the fare proposals was schedules for Sep 14. It's going to be a noisy one.

* * *

JUST BEFORE EVENING rush hour on Sep 11, at 5:10pm, a squirrel "committed suicide" in the catenary on Metro-North's New Haven line at CP Pike, now known as CP 223, between Harrison and Rye NY. The catenary was damaged and when the next train, train 1575, passed through the area crossing over from one track to another, the pantographs became tangled in the wires. The catenary over all four tracks was torn down, bringing everything to a halt and stranding up to 47,000 train riders. One track was opened at 5:58pm, but by then the schedules were a shambles. Passengers bound for New Haven finally arrived two, three and up to four hours late. As one TV station described it, "It was a commuter service meltdown."

The following morning, three out of four tracks were in use and trains were close to if not on time.

During the power outage, Amtrak train 94 was held at Shell on the Amtrak line, and no. 165 was held east of Stamford for further instructions. Train 94 eventually backed up toward Penn Station, NY, to terminate there, but then was allowed to continue to Boston. Train 176 was terminated at NY and turned to become Passenger Extra 165. Train 177 was terminated in New Haven and turned to become Passenger Extra 176. Passengers off train 177 took Metro-North train 1591, which was instructed to make a New Rochelle stop for Amtrak passengers. Train 179 ran through to Washington. Train 479 was terminated in New Haven with passengers transferring to 179 and the equipment was turned for 476 back to Springfield. Amtrak delays ranged from 20mins to 3hrs, 37mins. —Bob Underwood.

* * *

A SIGNAL OUTAGE on CSX occurred at North Possum Point VA on Sep 8 at 4:21 pm. As a result, CSX had to route all traffic between Washington DC and Quantico VA with wingle main line operation. Severe weather was reported throughout the area. Signals on the northound (no. 3) track were restored at 8:38pm and on the southbound no. 2 track for early next morning. Amtrak train 96 was delayed 40mins, no. 99 21mins (trains of Sep 8), and five Virginia Railway Express trains were affected. Train VRE 301 was terminated at Quantico, VRE303 was delayed 1hr, 10mins, and 305, 307 and 310 delayed 40-55mins.

With severe thunderstorms going on, Amtrak also had a failure of catenary power north of Davis in its Mid-Atlantic Division. At 4:39pm train 119 of Sep 8 passed Ragan on no. 3 track at which time catenary power was lost on that track between the yard and Ragan. The power was restored, and it tripped again 2mins later. The power director was able to shorten the outage to just between Ragan and Davis on the no. 3 track. Train 119 stopped at milepost 34.2 and reported no power but no pantograph damage. Due to the storm, it was unsave to transfer the 172 passengers to train 185. Train 185 picked up 119's engineer and took him to Davis, where he boarded engine 765 and returned to milepost 34.2 to rescue his train. At 5:23pm power was restored, but was lost again at 5:29. At 5:47pm engine 765 coupled ahead of train 119 and proceeded south of Davis on no. 1 track, where 119's pantograph was raised and engine power and head-end power restored. Engine 765 was cut off and 119 proceeded south at 6:15pm. Train 119 was delayed 1hr, 42mins. Other Amtrak trains were delayed from a few minutes to about a half-hour.

* * *

THE NEW YORKER magazine's Sep 18 issue features a cover drawing of a subway station, entitled "At the End of the Tunnel", by Eric Drooker. The station is likened to an ancient cave, with stalactites hanging from the ceiling and drawings of prehistoric animals on the wall.

THE VIRGINIA MUSEUM of Transportation will hold its 8th annual Railfair Oct 7 at its Roanoke VA location, 303 Norfolk Ave.

NYS&W'S COMMUTER OPERATION, known at OnTrack and based in Syracuse NY, lists 28 trains in its timetabel no. 3—14 each way between Syracuse Univ. Station and Carousel Center, downtown. The timetable comes in two versions, yellow & black on slick paper, and a version that shows a Budd RDC car, with steam excursions instead of a map on the reverse, printed on white cardboard in black and light brown. The reverse shows Susquehanna steamer 142. Also, OnTrack has a 4-color, 3-panel slick paper folder extolling the virtues on both the Rail Passenger Shuttle (City Express) and its Excursion Services. A brief history of the NYS&W is included. —Len Wallis.

AN AMFLEET TRAIN pulled by AMD103 locomotive 820 was in Portland ME Aug 15, carrying Amtrak President Tom Downs, who went there to promote the coming Portland-Boston train service. He said the route will probably start up next summer. The schedule may be as many as three or four round trips daily. Stops will be Saco, Wells, Dover and Exeter NH, Haverhill MA and North Station in Boston. The fare should be a bit under $20 one way, and about $30 round trip., for the 114-mile trip. Schedule time should be about two hours. Several important steps must be completed before a Sep 30 deadline to completing preparations for federal funding. Of capital improvements, the track must be upgraded from freight to passenger train standards, and the state of Maine must obtain three or four cab control cars for the push-pull service. The TrainRiders Northeast organization has been pushing relentlessly for this service since 1989, when they began with 21 members. Now they number over 1000. To join them, call the group at 207-TRY-RAIL.

* * *

A NEW TRAIN with the Sep 10 mini-timetable change is no. 145, the OLD DOMINION, running Springfield MA to Richmond VA on Sundays. Consist of the first train, seen at New Haven by Bob Underwood, was F40 engine 273 (Springfield-New Haven), AEM7 no. 908 (New Haven-Washington), and F40 334 (Washington-Richmond); cars 21604, 21097, 21104, 21040 and 21045 coaches, and Club car 20145. Club service was offered only between NY and Richmond. This equipment was scheduled to turn to become train 84 Richmond-Boston of Sep 11. A new Tidewater Service timecard appeared for the schedule change.

THE BALTIMORE AREA Transit Ass'n held its annual meeting Sep 16 in Baltimore, with speaker Tony Brown of the Office of Planning and Programming, Maryland Mass Transit Administration.

STEAM LOCO 611 will be unveiled in its new location at Virginia Museum of Transportation the evening of Oct 6, at 303 Norfolk Ave., Roanoke.

CONWAY SCENIC RAILROAD was to begin passenger service through Crawford Notch Sep 1. Five-hour excursion trains carry passengers from North Conway NH to the top of Crawford Notch and back. Trains will run through Columbus Day weekend.

BALTIMORE'S PENN STATION opened its 550-space parking garage Sep 1. It cost $14 million—$1 million over budget and a year late. By spring of 1997, a light rail line extension from Mount Royal station will run into lower Penn Station. It will be part of an extension also connecting Hunt Valley and the BWI Airport. The Penn Station line will allow for the first time a physical connection of light rail, Amtrak and MARC.

* * *

A MAJOR PHILOSOPHICAL difference has arisen between NY Mayor Giuliani and PATH, the Port Authority that service both New York and New Jersey. The Mayor believes that fares must be increased on the PATH commuter line, while PATH's orientation can be expressed in the words of a commissioner, "The last thing that we should do is raise fares and tolls." Giuliani notes that only 36% of PATH costs are generated from the farebox, while70% is in New York City. PATH fares are $1, while NYC fares are $1.25, to go to $1.50 soon.

THE COMMITTEE FOR Better Transit is telling NY transit riders that the system "is facing a fiscal crisis that could doom it through escalating fares, decreasing service, and rotting infrastructure." The CBT calls for consolidation of bureaucracies in NY transit systems to save money.

WEST COAST REPORT

As reported last issue, the CAPITOL Corridor trains began push-pull operation in mid-July. In this photo, train 724 is pulling into Berkeley in push mode on Sep 8, running 13mins late. The train consisted of California cars 8302 "Mount Shasta" cab control coach, 8008 "Stanislaus River" coach, Superliner snack-bar coach 35003 in use as food car, California cars 8004 ""San Gabriel River" coach, 8002 "San Joaquin River" coach, 8007 "Russian River" coach, and California locomotive 2001. The building in the photo is not the Berkeley station, but rather the China Station Restaurant that occupies the former SP University Avenue station building. RTN photo.

A NEW TRAIN between San Diego and San Luis Obispo will begin operation Oct 29. The proposed schedule for it has it departing San Diego at 12:30pm, arriving San Luis about 8:30pm. It returns from San Luis around 7:40 am, reaching San Diego at 3:45pm. A total of four trains will operate San Diego-Santa Barbara. The new Van Nuys station is expected to open Oct 29 as a staffed station.

The third sleeper has now been programmed for the COAST STARLIGHT through the end of this year. The Pacific Parlor car service on the train is expected to remain until year-end also, at which time a review of costs and benefits will determine its continuance. California cars are now operating on the CAPITOLS and on SAN JOAQUIN trains 712-717. As more coaches and new food service cars are delivered, they will be placed on more SAN JOAQUIN runs.

A new ticket location office has opened at the north end of the Ferry Building in San Francisco.

MOUNT BAKER INTERNATIONAL is handling record ridership, particularly on weekends, on the Seattle-Vancouver route. Negotiations are underway with BN and the equipment manufacturers to have tow trains operating next year. Additional testing of European-style trainsets may take place in 1996 between Eugene and Seattle as well as Los Angeles-San Diego.

New California schedules, as well as new national schedules, will be issued for Oct 29. Be sure to check new schedules for any planned travel after Oct 29.

San Juan Capistrano now charges for auto parking—$2 during the day, $5 overnight. Area residents may want to consider using Irvine, which remains free of charge. The Irvine ticket office is now open Sat & Sun mornings, in addition to weekedays until 7pm.

Lower off-peak season air-rail rates are in effect between So. Calif. and the Northwest on points served by United Airlines. This is a good way to try the new STARLIGHT first class lounge service, if your time is limited—rail one way, air the other.

FOR THOSE LIVING in the San Gabriel-Pomona Valleys, the Metrolink San Bernardino line provides an ideal way to make connections with Amtrak's SOUTHWEST CHIEF at San Bernardino. Connections now daily except Sunday allow one to avoid a drive to either San Bernardino or L.A. For boarding the SUNSET LIMITED, the new downtown Ontario stop is in service. It is well-lit, with ample parking. The Bakersfield Thruway buses now stop in Ontario as well as Claremont. The Pomona SUNSET LIMITED stop parking lot is now torn up for the first phase of the new Pomona Transportation Terminal/Metrolink stop set to open late in 1996 or early 1997.

METROLINK NOW PROVIDES Saturday service on the L.A.-San Bernardino line, with four round trips. Fares are at the 25% off-peak rates. During September the train makes an extra stop at the L.A. County Fair. Slight schedule changes will be made with a new Oct 2 schedule. On Oct 2 the long-awaited Orange County-Riverside service will start with two peak and one off-peak train. Mid-Jan will see service extended from Riverside to San Bernardino. New stations are open at West Corona and Riverside-La Sierra. Additional storage tracks and parking are being constructed at Riverside and San Bernardino. The Norwalk and Burbank Airport stations are now open.

NEW DOUBLE-TRACK on the Santa Fe, part of the improvements for commuter service, is now in service between Riverside and Prado Dam. Double-track construction will continue through Santa Ana Canyon to Yorba Linda during 1996. A third track is under construction between Riverside and Highgrove, along with a fourth track through the San Bernardino area.

AN OPEN HOUSE at Fullerton station was being held Sep 17. Official dedication events were to take place between 2 and 4pm. Amtrak, Caltrans, Metrolink and Santa Fe were invited. A new Metrolink F59 loco, Caltrans F59 2004 and California cab car 8304 "Mount Wilson" were expected at the event. Before the date, engine 2004 and cab car 8304 were seen on the San Diego line testing the ATS equipment.

AT ABOUT MIDNIGHT Aug 30 the cutovers were completed to open up double track between West Riverside and Arlington. Slow orders remain while final surfacing takes place. Track crews then moved to San Bernardino to continue work from Baseline to West Yard tower. New access to the Riverside Metrolink station is expected in mid-Nov, with the third track to Highgrove finished in early January. Rail and ties are in place, but several signal bridges must be replaced that are in the way of the new third track. For Operation Redblock Beach party in Oceanside Sep 9, Metrolink donated a trainset to carry Amtrak employees and family. On Aug 25 Amtrak ran a test train San Diego-L.A. to test the new express SAN DIEGO run. On Aug 29 Amtrak was to have run a test train L.A.-San Luis Obispo, operating behind train 14, with four coaches and two locomotives.

SAN DIEGAN 774 was in two 7-car sections on Aug 19. The L.A. extra set ran first from L.A., and the normal 774 from Santa Barbara ran second. The extra set of equipment was placed on train 578 at San Diego to return as no. 585, making for 11 cars total, with two cafe cars. On Aug 26 train 585 had 12 cars! This was surprising because 11 cars and two locos is the maximum length. One loco and one coach were north of the Ash St signals. After loading the rear cars in San Diego, the train backed south across Broadway, clearing the Ash St signals, then with clear green, proceeded north in a rather neat procedure. Consist of the train was engine 229, cars 44083, 44107, 44019, 44073, 44023, 43040, 54069, 44206, 44197, 44064, 43015, 44846 and engine 238. There was no cab car. The normal Custom Class and cafe were on the rear. There were two cafe cars. The extra coaches on the head end were for Solana Beach -Del Mar Race Track customers. No extra Custom Class cars were available for additional reserved seating.

On Aug 27 train 774 reached San Diego on time with 11 cars including two cafes. Three coaches, one cafe and one loco were dropped at San Diego and added to the consist of no. 576 to become no. 583. That allowed 774 and 783 to have two cafe cars each. Train 585 left San Diego with nine cars, including two cafe cars. These all came down on no. 578. No. 780/587 was a 9-car train including one cafe car. No. 782 was a 5-car train. A deadhead move of six cars arrived later to protect 571 on Monday morning. Ridership seemed heavy that weekend.
—Ed Von Nordeck with El Simon & Bob Korach.

AMTRAK WILL INSTALL next spring an automated ticket machine in the new Centennial Station at Olympia/Lacey WA. The station was built with volunteer labor and replaced a lean-to shelter at the former station stop of East Olympia. Staffed by 60 volunteers, passengers are assisted in boarding or leaving trains. The volunteers also provide information but cannot sell tickets. As a reward for their service, the top 15 volunteers each year in the number of hours served win free trips anywhere on the Amtrak system.

BOB WHITE, 47, an employee of King County Metro Transit since 1977, has been chosen as the interim executive director of the Central Puget Sound RTA. White will run the three-county agency through the next election on a regional transit plan. The election is expected to be next spring.

DRAMATIC POPULATION GROWTH on Whidbey Island in Puget Sound has made the ferry crossing from Mukilteo to Clinton, at the south end of the island one of the most clogged transportation routes in the state of Washington, according to the State Ferry System. In its Sep newsletter, Inland Crossings, plans were annnounced for a future intermodal terminal at Mukilteo in Snohomish County., which would provide for another ferry slip and connections for local bus services and possible future commuter trains using the BN tracks. Environmental studies have been completed, the ferry system said.
—Jerome F. Sheldon.

"CALIFORNIA'S GOLD" TV series seen on PBS in California, Nevada and Hawaii, will do a program on the original CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR in October. In San Francisco it will air on KQED at 3:30pm Oct 14. Says the producer, "...producer/host Huell Howser climbs aboard one of the original "Vista Dome" cars to take a ride from Reno NV to Oakland CA accompanied by a group of people who rode the original ZEPHYR. They share their stories about what a special experience it was to ride on this old neat train." This is program episode no. 610.

THE MONTEREY TRAIN scheduled to run Oakland-Monterey Sep 16 & 17 (see last issue, p. 8) was cancelled for lack of customer interest. Evidently, advertising came too little and too late. Inquiring at Jack London Square station about the special train on Sep 16, RTN was pointed instead to CAPITOL train 721, scheduled to leave at 9:51am, with a bus connection to Monterey. Train 721 left a bit late, at 10:05, the exact same time as train 6, the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR. Train 6 was on the station track and no. 721 on the main line track, and the latter was loaded by having customers walk through the open door of a sleeper on the ZEPHYR

and out the opposite door to reach the other track. No. 721 had six cars and was pulled by California locomotive 2009. Train 6 had private car Frisco "Cimarron River" on the rear.

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AMTRAK WEST'S business plan for the COAST STARLIGHT for next year includes proposing to use a second dining car and a total of five sleepers. The interior design of the Pacific Parlor car, widely acclaimed by passengers who have used it, might be further enhanced.

A new look is being taking at the Coast Route with the likely merger of UP and SP in the works. Passenger train officials seem to favor bringing tilt-train technology to the route to improve travel times on the curvy track. TRAC reports that Coast High Speed RAil Coordinator Claude Everhart says that his Commission is willing to participate financially in improving the Coast Line, even though it has written it off as a true high-speed contender for Northern-Southern California rail travel. TRAC also notes that "a good case can be made for a second day train to directly link San Francisco and Los Angeles."

BART TOLD RTN that it is aiming for a December opening of its North Concord/ Martinez station. Beyond that, the Pittsburgh/Antioch station should open next year. The Dublin/Pleasanton station should open in summer, 1996.

A bill to allow BART to take over operation of the Capitol Corridor has been stalled in committee by State Sen. Quentin Kopp, who wants to open the matter to competitive bidding.

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SAN DIEGO TROLLEY opened its latest extension Aug 26, a 3.6-mile extension of the East Line, from El Cajon Transit Center to Santee Town Center, with intermediate stops at Arnele Avenue and Weld Boulevard. The media reported that hundreds of people were on hand for the inaugural train departure from Santee at 1:00pm. In the photo below we see an opening-day train. Santee City Manager said that the extension would give his city of 54,000 a new sense of identity. Railfans are impressed with the interesting new stretch of track, complete with a striking Swiss-style concrete viaduct. The line, costing $109 million to build, was expensive. The MTDB said that trolleys will run every 30mins on the line, and will be closely coordinated with connecting bus routes.

In other San Diego news, the Trolley is currently undergoing a line straightening of a 3000-foot S curve between Lemon Grove and La Mesa. The project also includes building a second bridge over State Route 94 to permit double-track operation. The entire project should be completed in Jan.

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SAN FRANCISCO MUNI'S F-line streetcar operation began Sep 1. Vintage streetcars are used on the run between Transbay Terminal and Market & Castro Sts.

THE EXTENSION OF CalTrain into downtown San Francisco, once promised for 1996, will now be 2001 at the earliest, or 2005, reported the S.F. Examiner Sep 10. CalTrain officials will decide next year on the exact location of the S.F. downtown station.

A MAN, POSSIBLY mentally ill, in an unprovoked attack, shoved a 33-year old woman into the path of a BART train at the Oakland 19th St station at 5pmAug 31. Her right hand was mangled when a train passed over her. He was captured by other passengers, and the district attorney charged him with aggravated mayhem. It was the first incident of its kind on BART.

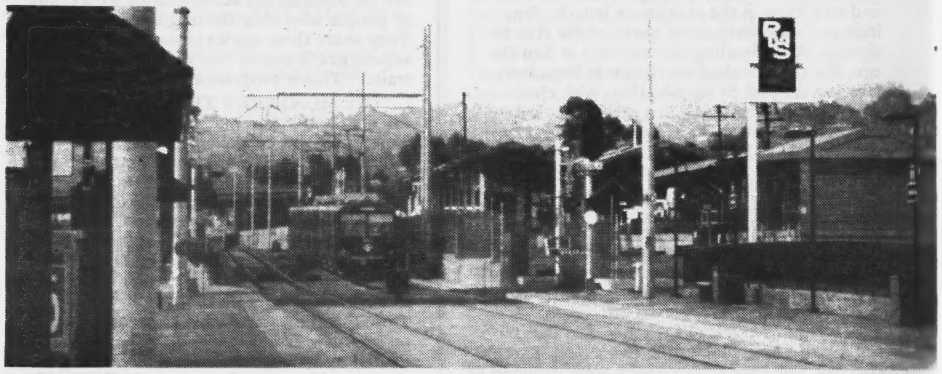
A TRAIN OF 21 private RR cars returned from British Columbia, where owners had attended the annual private car owners' convention. Drawn by three Amtrak engines, it was to reach L.A. at 11:45pm Sep 13.

BART DIRECTORS HAVE proposed a compromise plan to put their S.F. Airport station close to but not within the airport terminal area.

FERRY BOAT LINES on S. F. Bay will merge when Pier 39's Blue & Gold fleet buys the Red & White fleet owned by Crowley Maritime Corp. for about $25 million.

MORE INFO ON our rear cover photo and caption on p. 2: The Santa Fe engine was used after train 718 of Sep 6 hit a car near Merced, badly damaging engine 2006.

BART WILL INCREASE the number of trains in service by five starting Oct 16. Earlier the move had been set for Sep 11. Trains in the Transbay Tube will be running every 2.5mins instead of the current 3 minutes, BART said. During peak hours, 50 rather than 45 trains will be in operation. There will be a glitch, however, for awhile in Contra Costa County bus connections, as County Connections will change their schedules to match BART sooner than BART will change theirs.



Fred Matthews.

PLEASURE OVER A LATE TRAIN

By Jim Russell

In RTN 529 I wrote about an Antioch turn done on July 22—a trip from Emeryville to Antioch and return on the SAN JOAQUINS, with dinner in between at the Riverview Lodge restaurant across from the Antioch station.

I tried a similar trip on Aug 13, but including dinner at a different restaurant. Train 718 left Emeryville on time at 5:25pm with California engine 2007 and five Horizonliner cars. Twenty minutes out of the station we met what must have been SAN JOAQUIN 715, with a consist similar to ours. Three minutes later, the lounge was announced as open. Not too bad for timing, but not too good either. We were out of Martinez at 6:12, just a minute late, and reached Antioch pretty much on time.

Here a friend with a car met me, and we decided to try Humphrey's restaurant rather than the Riverview. Humphrey's is a few blocks west of the station, also on the river, and while one could walk the distance, we had the car to help us timewise.

Humphrey's is a pretty, more elegant-looking restaurant than the Riverview, and is located in a park-like area along the river, to which folks can come and stroll by the water. It seems especially popular at sunset—it's a beautiful spot.

Humphrey's is named for Humphrey the Whale who a few years ago got lost in San Francisco Bay and swam upstream, finally turning around at this spot near where the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers join. The whale was the subject of close media attention for many days as wildlife scientists tried to lure him back into the salt water, lest he perish in the fresh water of the river.

The restaurant lobby holds numerous photos and other mementos of the whale's visit. The building's walls are all glass to provide the best river viewing. But too bad the place isn't run as well as it was built. Service was excruciatingly slow, and dinner, except for the clam chowder, was well below par. Also, the place lacks transparent shades for the windows, so near sunset one had either to brave the glaring sun or to request the shade be drawn and obscure the view—the very thing that many of the customers had come to enjoy. Patronage was not very high, so I suspect many have discovered the drawbacks of this restaurant.

Return train 717 is scheduled to leave Antioch at 8:01, but by 7:45 we were still on our salad course and desperately trying to catch the eye of the waitress. Our entrees were delivered so late that we had to give up hope of catching the SAN JOAQUIN back and to think of alternate means of transportation.

The last straw in the food category was the chicken marsala, which should have been tender and juicy from careful cooking in a tasty wine sauce. Instead it was dry and hard and covered with an obviously cheap, commercial sauce of some type, which also was the same sauce used on the appetizers. We had to tell the staff of our disappointment and they offered to bring us something else, but we didn't want to spend more time, so we left, and since the 8:01 time had long come and passed, we did not hurry back to the station, but took our time looking around the park.

At this point we heard a train, and saw a long Santa Fe freight westbound rumbling through Antioch. This made us think that perhaps Amtrak was running late. We went to the station to find a fair-sized crowd of people waiting. We learned that the 8:01 train had not yet arrived! I can remember only one other instance when I'd been pleased that a train was late. The present one arrived finally at 8:50 and took five minutes to detrain and entrain the Sunday loads.

While we waited here, I took some early night shots of the station and its beautiful backdrop of river, hills and post-sunset sky. We will try to publish one in a future issue. Surely this little city ranks high on the list of scenic Amtrak station locations.

Return train 717 consisted of California locomotive 2005, baggage car 1248, Hi-level diner 39982, California coaches 8007 "Russian River", 8012 "San Lorenzo River", 8009 "Santa Ana River", and 8008 "Stanislaus River", and cab control car 8307 "Mount Baldy."

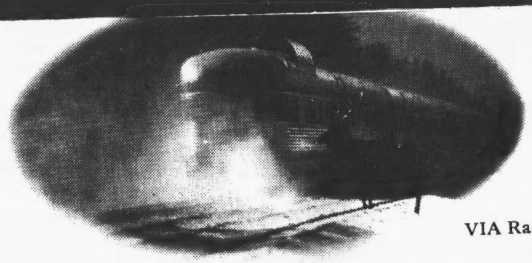
I had brought a pair of headphones which I plugged in to the armrest connection and found that of the 12 available channels, channel 3 was operative, carrying radio station KYLD at 107 FM, with light rock music.

People really seem to enjoy these new cars with their tables and variety of seating. I had a table to myself, next to a huge, clear window.

We reached Martinez at 9:18 and spent 19 minutes there unloading a lot of people and baggage to connect to the STARLIGHT. We heard that 100 people were making the connection. At 10:13 we met the STARLIGHT somewhere in El Cerrito, it also running a little late, and at 10:24 we made the final stop at Emeryville, almost an hour late on a padded schedule.

If Amtrak California were to run a train late, it couldn't have picked a better day.

RAIL CANADA



VIA Rail

THREATENED WITH ABANDONMENT on Jan 1, 1996 are three VIA Rail routes in Quebec, warned Normand Parisien, director of Transport 2000 Quebec last month. Parisien said that Bill C-101, the Canada Transportation Act, section 196, wipes out orders-in-council which have kept three sections of rail line in service: (1) Chanlder-Gaspe line (VIA trains from Montreal to Gaspe); (2) Charny-Levis-Montmagny line (VIA trains to Halifax and Gaspe); and (3) Senneterre-La Sarre line (VIA trains from Montreal and Senneterre to Cochrane).

These lines were ordered abandoned by the National Transportation Agency, but appeals to Cabinet led to orders-in-council which protect these lines. "Passengers, municipalities and Quebec authorities fought hard to maintain these essential services," said Parisien. "It is shocking to see how sneaky the Federal Government has become. It's using a double negative in an obscure clause buried deep in an omnibus bill to hide the truth."

Said Parisien, "The bill is a time bomb for many communities. It means the elimination of surface transportation for Schefferville and two other roadless regions in northern Ontario. The Minister of Finance promised his budget cuts would be transparent and would not lead to abandoning remote communities. This bill does not stand up to that test." The director of Transport 2000 Quebec says the environmental transportation group is calling on passengers, businesses and other supporters of the rail system to ask their local Member of Parliament to make the bill more fair and straightforward.

CANADA'S HIGH SPEED Rail study is faulty, charged Transport 2000 Canada in an Aug 30 release. "They're playing with numbers. The study says building a Quebec City to Windsor high-speed rail network will cost $18 billion. They've pumped up that number by including $9 billion for inflation and interest. They don't include these factors in highway or airport construction estimates" said David Glastonbury, National President of T-2000.

"The study is two years overdue. It.s been subverted by bureaucrats and politicians who will not deal honestly with the costs of transportation," Glastonbury said of the Federal-Ontario-Quebec government study released on Aug 29. He said it's time for the three levels of government to start with smaller high-speed rail projects like Ottawa-Montreal or Kitchener-Toronto and gradually build up a network. "A 20% reduction in the time required to travel by rail between Ottawa and Montreal will create a 20% increase in ridership. We've had enough studies. A High Speed Rail project will help Canada develop a better, cleaner, faster and ultimately cheaper passenger transportation system."

TORONTO SUBWAY CRASH reported on in RTN 530 & 531 was caused, said Ontario's Chief Coroner, by the failure of a safety device and by wear and tear on the tracks. He said that a trip arem that is designed to set a train's emergency brakes if the train runs a red light had failed in the Aug 11 wreck that killed three women and injured 36 other people. The failure came in conjunction with worn tracks to produce the accident, the first in the TTC's 42 years of subway operation. There may be further comments on operator behavior later when an inquest begins on Nov 6.

In florid language the Toronto Star described the accident: "The TTC ceased to be North America's safest public transit system last night in the crushing horror of a rear-end collision that killed two [early report] people in the pitch-black tunnels beneath the western side of the city." The TTC has since modified its 219 trip arms. Noted one observer, "This may cause major refitting on older rapir transit lines. Unless the dim white light that distinguished two meanings of a red signal had burned out, there was operator error—he missed the lack of the supplementary white light whose absence indicated 'train in block' rather than 'slow down'. But I suspect the inquiry will demand that a red signal mean one thing only —and that speed control be imposed by a separate signal system."

Added the observer, "I commuted on this stretch for years, and drivers habitually 'challenged' red boards, expecting them to clear, or, if not, being dumped by the tripper—which apparently was not a punishable offense on the TTC."

The cost of the subway accident was said to be over $6 million.

T-2000 CANADA REPORTED that temporary funds may be provided to regional passenger services. As reported above, Bill C-101 abolishes subsidies to passenger operations on the Algoma Central, Ontario Northland and Quebec North Shore & Labrador. The Minister of Transport may use discretionary funds to keep the services going for a while. The funding level would be reduced, however.

Pittsburgh's Amazing Incline Railways

BY BRUCE J. RUSSELL

During the 1870s, several American cities such as Johnstown and Pittsburgh PA, Wheeling WV, Cincinnati OH, Hoboken and Weehawken NJ, and Los Angeles CA outgrew their original zones of settlement and began expanding in several directions. The overflow of housing spread onto and beyond the surrounding hills and cliffs. Consequently, people were compelled either to walk or ride up these elevations as best they could. This was a time-consuming and tiring process, and during the hot and humid summer it was also dangerous for one's health. Nevertheless, the building of residential dwellings atop hills continued until cities often became known for the number of them within their boundaries. For instance, San Francisco, like Rome, was noted for its hills which numbered seven. In many cases, from the summit of these elevations unsurpassed views could be had for many miles.

In the 1870s the technology of the automobile, not to mention improved transmissions and gearing, didn't exist. Thus there was no way one could ascend these hills by car, bus or truck. Furthermore, the gradients were often so steep that even four sturdy horses were unable to haul a loaded wagon from ground level to higher points. In short, a genuine dilemma existed in cities like Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, etc. In San Francisco the problem was ultimately solved by constructing street-running, cable-hauled railways which enabled the residents to ascend and descend the higher elevations.

What came to the rescue of Pittsburgh and Cincinnati was the stationary coal-fired steam engine. Beginning in the early 1870s, both cities constructed numerous inclined railways which relied on steam engines to provide power to move cables which in turn were attached to passenger-carrying vehicles. Generally the mechanism operated on a counterbalance system. As one car ascended, the other descended. This reduced the amount of work the steam engine had to do.

By 1890 Pittsburgh had 17 inclined railways climbing its various hills. Some of them were "doubles", meaning that there was one incline strictly for passengers, and adjacent to it was another which was designed for carrying horses and wagons. These were usually the gigantic Clydesdale horses made popular by Budweiser beer. The two- or four-horse team plus the heavily-loaded freight wagon would enter the platform, gates would be closed, and a bell would ring. The steam engine, situated in the powerhouse atop the hill, would then start turning a huge wheel which in turn moved the cable. Slowly the platform with its cargo would start rising. Frequently the distance traveled from base to summit level was over a quarter of a mile at a 25% grade or greater. Once the top was reached, the wagon would roll off the platform. Certainly this was better than forcing the poor beasts to use roads to reach the top.

People were carried in special saloons which often resembled streetcar bodies with clerestory roofs and stained glass upper windows. Often they were very ornate. The entrances to the inclines were likewise located in buildings which bore some resemblance to railway stations. In general, their architecture was Victorian and heating was by a pot-bellied stove. On the outside was posted the name of the incline and the hours of operation and fee schedule. The inclines ran frequently throughout the day. The upper level contained the stationary steam engine, the winding mechanism, and the coal storage area. Usually the powerhouse was situated adjacent to the summit station and was visible for miles because of the black smoke continuously being emitted from the tall chimney. Until the early years of the 20th Century, the stations and passenger-carrying saloons were illuminated either by candles or gas. Often at both the base and the summit level a passenger could transfer to a normal horsecar line, and after 1890 an electric-powered streetcar. In many instances the incline railways were also owned by the local transit company. However, this was never universal, and many inclines were under private ownership. As a side note, the term for such conveyances in this nation was "incline" or inclined railway, while in most other countries of the world the name "funicular" was applied. In Los Angeles the incline railway was known as the "Angel's Flight."

It would be impossible to list all the incline railways that existed in the U.S., since they were so numerous by the turn of the century. However, Cincinnati and Pittsburgh were the two cities with the largest number. Because of them, settlement spread from the area close to the riverfront onto most of the surrounding hills and beyond.

The type of track structure was generally the same as that on normal railways—"T" rail spiked to wooden ties. But this was set atop a trestle that rose at a sharp angle. In the beginning these were fabricated from wood, but by the early 1900s most had been rebuilt with either iron or steel. The actual cable was always steel, since rope wasn't considered strong or safe enough. Each night when the system shut down, a cable inspection was made, the same as on San Francis-

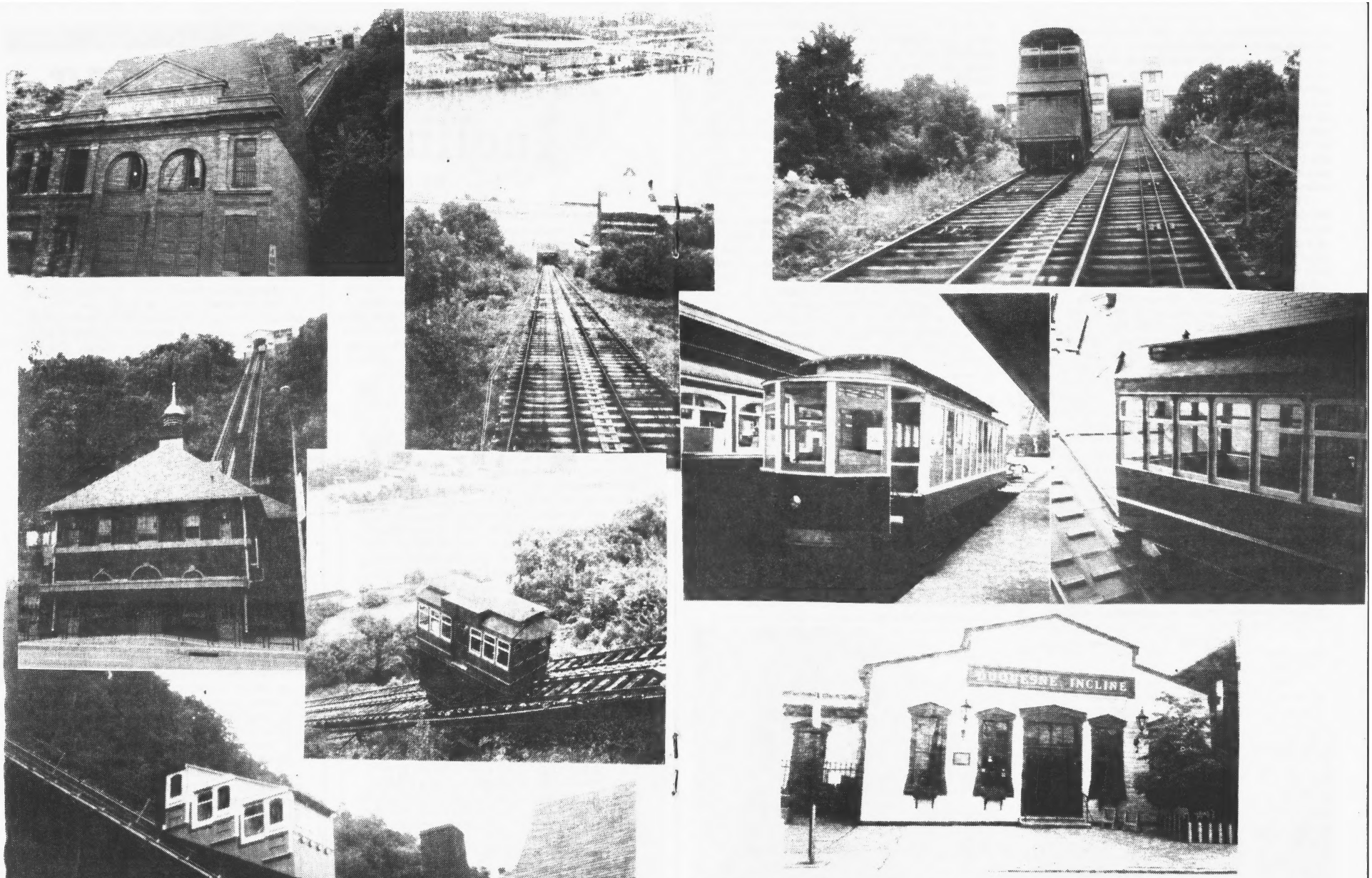


PHOTO CAPTIONS: (Page 12, top left:) The base station of the Duquesne Incline. This Victorian building dates from 1877. (Top right:) A view from the summit level of Duquesne Incline, showing Three Rivers Stadium across the river. (Middle left:) The base station of the Monongahela Incline, dating from 1870. (Middle right:) A car of the Duquesne Incline. These cars, built in 1877, resemble trolley cars with clerestory roofs. (Bottom:) A Monongahela Incline car, built recently to an 1870 design. Note the tiered arrangement of seating.

(Page 13, top:) A Duquesne Incline car descending toward the base station. (Middle left:) At the Station Square complex in Pittsburgh are found these two World War I-vintage streetcars. (Middle right:) Closer view of a Duquesne Incline car. These cars contain ornate wood panelling. (Bottom:) Summit level station of Duquesne Incline includes a gift shop and mini-museum.It, too, dates from 1877. All photos by the author, taken August 7.

co's street-running cable cars. Also for safety reasons on the inclines there were usually two cables—a hauling strand that carried the weight and an auxiliary or safety cable that constituted a backup. If one snapped, the other would prevent the car from careening down the slope and crashing into the base station. Nevertheless, there were accidents on the inclines and lives were lost. However, the benefits of the inclines were enormous, and they made life easier for people and animals during the pre-automobile era.

The eclipse of incline railways began after World War I, as improved roads and motor vehicles began providing an alternative means of ascending steep slopes in hilly cities. Gradually, trucks with powerful gears were able to get from surface to summit levels using new roads carved into hillsides and onto the sides of cliffs. Frequently such streets had many hairpin curves and sometimes a truck plunged down the side. Likewise, improvements to buses made it possible for them to surmount steep hills. Consequently, the incline railways began to suffer a serious erosion of both freight and passenger traffic and many began closing. In effect, they became obsolete when newer, improved forms of technology arrived on the scene. During the 1930s, those that remained substituted electric power for mechanical, allowing the steam engines and power plants to be scrapped. This power was generally purchased commercially from local utilities. Elimination of the stationary steam engines was practical, but it made the overall operation less interesting. The chugging sound of the engines was something missed by everyone.

World War II with its curbs on both gasoline and rubber tires for civilian use saved many inclined railways that would have disappeared during the early 1940s. Frequently, creaking mechanisms were patched up and made to keep operating because there was a need for transportation in a particular area. Often parts were fabricated from scratch. By this time the illumination of the passenger-carrying saloons was by electricity. In cases where a particular incline contained separate tracks for freight and passengers, the freight side had frequently been abandoned in the 1920s because of the ending of horse-drawn transport of cargo. Hence, alongside the surviving portion could sometimes be seen the remains of another track. This was the case in both Pittsburgh and Cincinnati.

Following the end of hostilities, abandonment of incline railways occured with regularity as transit systems went entirely to buses, eliminating their streetcars at the same time. Although many regretted the end of the colorful inclines which provided great views, most shrugged it off in the name of progress. Until the 1970s with its emphasis on historic preservation, there was little thought given to saving an incline as an example of the technology of yesteryear. Not one managed to survive in Cincinnati!

In Los Angeles, the Angel's Flight Incline Railway was disassembled and placed in storage during the late 1950s. It is now being rebuilt at another location. In the New York area, the Mount Beacon Incline, closed about 1970, lies derelict, and from time to time there is talk of restoring it. In days of yore, people disembarked from Hudson River steamboats and boarded the cars of the incline which pulled them up a minor mountain or steep hill to the summit of Mt. Beacon, so named because it once carried signal lights which could be seen by vessels on the river.

Cincinnati eliminated its last incline railway about 1960. There was considerable agitation to retain at least one model of this unique form of local transport, but funding was a problem. Had one of the city's inclines such as the Mt. Adams lasted a few more years, it might be in operation today, But alas, in 1960 or thereabouts nobody whose influence counted or who controlled pools of capital cared enough. The city on the Ohio is poorer for this shortsightedness.

Meanwhile in Pittsburgh the number of inclines declined after World War II. In 1964 the Castle Shannon was shut down and in 1966 the Knoxville stopped running. This left only two—the Monongahela and the Duquesne. These sole survivors of 17 such railways have mercifully been listed as historic structures and are considered safe from closure. For students of urban transportation they are a "must see" during any visit to that city, which also boasts a light rail transit system. What's also nice is the ability to transfer from a light rail trolley car directly onto the Monongahela Incline at Station Square at the base of Mt. Washington which overlooks the river and the entire downtown area. Let's take a closer look at each of Pittsburgh's two surviving inclines. While basically similar, they have many differences.

Both of Pittsburgh's remaining incline railways can be reached from downtown (and from Amtrak) by means of the light rail line. In the photo, a light rail train is stopped at Station Square, close to the boarding area for the Monongahela Incline. B. Russell photo.

THE MONONGAHELA INCLINE

This inclined railway was originally built in 1870. Before its construction, large numbers of German immigrants had begun to settle the Mt. Washington District, and their transportation needs were growing. The trek up and down twisting paths was too time-consuming and prohibitive for horsedrawn wagons. Many of these Germans recalled the *steilbahns* which existed in their homeland. These were funiculars or inclines that climbed from lower elevations to higher. Many existed along the rivers of what was then the German Empire ruled by a Kaiser. Passengers disembarking from steamboats on the Rhine frequently rode the *steilbahns* to the summits of cliffs and hills overlooking that mighty waterway. Hence, German technical skills and expertise were one of the driving forces behind the building of the Monongahela Incline.

Work began in 1868 and the line was ready for service in 1870. Initially it was designed for passengers only, but in 1884 a parallel set of tracks for horse teams was installed. This was known as the Monongahela freight elevator. The base station of the incline was adjacent to the main terminus of the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie RR—(original building, not the current edifice which was construction about 1904). Giant riverboats equipped with stern and side paddlewheels also docked at this location. After 1890, electric-powered streetcars passed in front of the base station. In short, there was no lack of business to be served. The coal-fired boilers at the summit level atop Mt. Washington were in use at least 20 hours per day, their hungry fireboxes consuming tons of coal which probably arrived from points on the Ohio River. It was unloaded from barges, placed on the incline, and taken to the top.

The Monongahela Incline began losing traffic in the 1920s due to the factors previously cited. In 1935 the freight section was shut down. Also, electric power was substituted for steam, and the powerhouse and boilers were demolished. Nevertheless, many passengers continued to transfer to the incline from the P&LE trains and local trolleys. (By this time the overnight passenger boats on the river were either gone or about to be.)

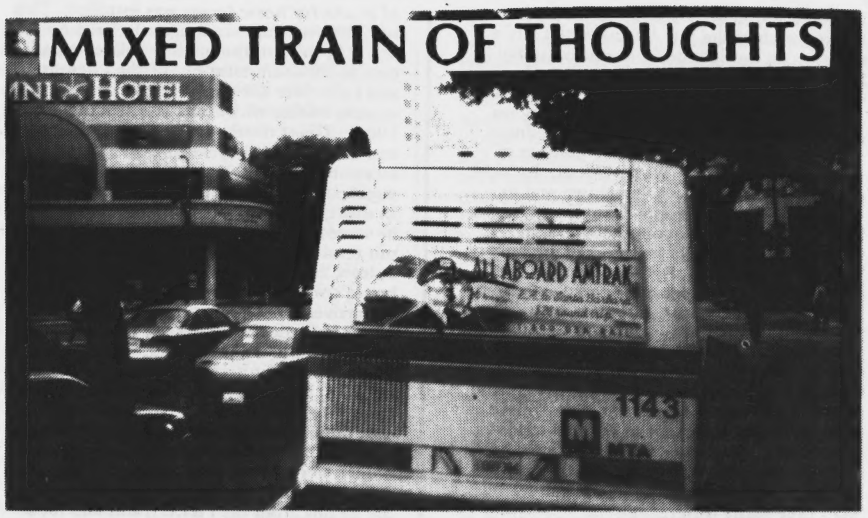
After World War II, business eroded further, in part due to the gradual elimination of passenger trains, both long distance and commuter, on the P&LE plus proliferation of automobiles. In 1964 the Monongahela Incline was taken over by the Pittsburgh Port Authority and merged into the city's existing transit system, which was still mainly streetcar-oriented, with hundreds of PCCs operating over a bast plexus of routes. (One of this organization's initial goals was to convert the network to buses and build a monorail-type line dubbed "Skybus." By 1968, all but seven streetcar routes had vanished in the name of what the agency's public relations flunkies termed "progress.")

About 1970, the Monongahela Incline was recognized as a National Historic Landmark and this is what probably saved it, since major repairs costing millions of dollars were

(continued on page 21)

Here we see the 1926-era *Delta Queen,* formerly a California steamboat which migrated east in 1946, docked at Pittsburgh after a trip from Louisville KY. On the left is Mt. Washington where the Duquesne and Monongahela Inclines still run. This writer has made the eight-day voyage, disembarked from the boat, walked across a bridge, and boarded the Monongahela Incline just as was done in days of yore. Before the advent of railroads, steamboats such as this provided the principal internal transportation within America's heartland. Author's photo, July ? 1995.

MIXED TRAIN OF THOUGHTS



On the rear of a Los Angeles bus appears an ad, probably a Caltrans ad, for Amtrak travel to Santa Barbara. Pictured is a new California locomotive. Similar ads run in Northern California, for travel to Sacramento and Yosemite. Photo by Marvin Doudna.

ALL ABOARD AMERICA fares for fall were announced by Amtrak. There are two varieties, refundable and non-refundable. Refundable tickets, good for 45 days, now offer unlimited stopovers Sep 17-Dec 14. For off-peak travel (Sep 17-Dec 14 and Jan 6-Jun 13) the rates are $198 for one zone, $258 for two, and $318 for three. For peak travel (Dec 15-Jan 5 and Jun 14-Aug 18) the rates are $228 one zone, $318 two zones, and $378 three zones. The non-refundable tickets are new, with a lower price and 30-day unlimited stopovers, available on reservations ma de through Oct 31. They must be paid for within 14 days of reservation, with no refund after purchase. They are for off-peak travel Sep 17-Dec 14, and cost $158 one zone, $198 two zones, and $278 three zones. Seniors can get a further savings of 15%. Auto Club members can use AAA coupons for a further 10% discount. Either plan allow purchase of sleeper, Custom or Club Class accommodations at the regular space chages. Space inventory for both the 30-day and 45-day plans are limited. You can use these fares for one-way travel, if that would be advantageous, but in some cases other lower excursion or promotional fares might be available. RTN suggests you contact the travel agents advertised in this issue, or Let's Travel·Tours at 1-800-538-7876.....

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THE CARDINAL, as reported earlier, will remain in service after having been threatened by service cuts. The train will be assigned Superliner equipment for its route between Chicago and Washington DC. The new Viewliner sleepers are expected to enter service on the LAKE SHORE LIMITED during the spring of 1996. The BROADWAY LIMITED has been discontinued, and a connecting train, the THREE RIVERS, now operates NY-Philadelphia-Harrisburg-Pittsburgh, where it makes connections to Chicago with the CAPITOL LIMITED. The latter now has Superliners too. Slumbercoaches will be removed from the CRESCENT Oct 29. This winter, Slumbercoaches will continue to operate on the LAKE SHORE LIMITED and SILVER METEOR only.....

OTHER EQUIPMENT NOTES: As of Aug 31 13 coaches and seven cab control coaches of the California car order had been delivered, the most recent being cab car 8308 "Mount San Gorgonio." Of the Superliner II order, the new coaches were supposed to have a restroom upstairs, but the first cars seen off the assembly line do not. Coach 34102 was in Chicago and 34104 in Philadelphia at the end of August, while 34103 was in Sanford FL for AUTO TRAIN crew training. New transition dorm-sleeper 39012 was in service, with 39013 enroute to Amtrak. Of the Superliner I 35000-series snack coaches, they are running on the EMPIRE BUILDER and on the Eugene-Portland-Seattle service. One of them, no. 35003, is in use on the CAPITOL CORRIDOR trains as a food car. The new dual-power electric-diesel engines, numbered

in the 700 series, are now in service on the NY-Albany Empire Service line, as reported elsewhere in this issue.....

MOST AMTRAK FARES, other than the All Aboard America fares listed above, reportedly rose about 5% on Sep 10.....

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AMTRAK AUTHORIZATION BILL in the House, HR 1788, should be marked up by the end of September, NARP said, by Bud Shuster's Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. This is the bill that was held up before by the opposition of labor leaders, after they had initially approved its wording. Said NARP, chiding the leaders, "Rail workers have not been well served by labor's preoccupation with the authorization at the expense of the more important appropriations bills. (House-Senate conferees on the appropriations were expected to meet while this issue of RTN is being printed and mailed).....

NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM bill in the House, HR 2274, may also get a floor vote while we are in press. Said NARP of this bill, "We hope this bill will remain silent, rather than negative, on the Senate-passed Roth-Biden language, making passenger rail eligible for ISTEA funding. In that event, the House-Senate conference committee could well include Roth-Biden".....

THE HOUSTON LEG of the TEXAS EAGLE was discontinued Sep 10. NARP said it hoped some good would come of this—namely, to motivate rail advocates in Texas to once more form a state association of railroad passengers. NARP noted that Texas is the largest state lacking an organized network of passenger train supporters.....

THE MERGER OF the UP and SP resulted in release of a list of rail lines that might be abandoned if the railroads indeed merge. Only one of them, apparently is an Amtrak route, and that is the Houston leg of the TEXAS EAGLE, which would lose 42 miles between Navasota and Cypress TX. The train on that line was discontinued Sep 10, and a later revision of the list removed the route from the threatened category. The SP reportedly said that 98% of the current combined mileage of the two railroads would be retained. Rail advocates on the West Coast are generally upbeat about the prospect of the railroads being combined. For one thing, the merged railroad should be easier to negotiate with. Said TRAC President Dan McNamara in TRAC's Aug-Sep publication, "UP management has a level of practicality and professionalism that is so refreshing. There are big differences in how railroads view the business they are in and their customers. I think in five years we will realize a lot of what we saw as railroad inertia was just the SP." TRAC hopes that the UP would rather readily sell the Capitol Corridor to a public agency, which would get things moving on line upgrading, since UP has what it considers a better freight line between the Bay Area and Sacramento, via Stockton.....

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THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY System bill referred to above would take the transportation trust fund off budget. This would be very damaging to Amtrak, NARP pointed out. The bill in the House is the counterpart to Senate bill S-440, and the latter gives states flexibility to spend ISTEA money on Amtrak projects, while the House bill is silent on that matter. The highway lobby has been lobbying heavily all summer to try to prevent the possibility of any ISTEA money going to rail projects.....

RAIL ADVOCATES ARE quite disappointed with the discontinuance of the BROADWAY LIMITED and especially with the poor substitute that Amtrak came up with. NARP characterized its drawbacks as being no reservations, no checked baggage and extremely unattractive layovers at Pittsburgh for through passengers. NARP said that Amtrak still has not answered its question as to why through cars cannot be operated on the CAPITOL LTD.Amtrak has said that Superliner cars cannot be run into Philadelphia because of clearances. But NARP pointed out that Conrail ran its first double-stack container train across Pennsylvania on Sep 7, following the route of the BROADWAY LIMITED as far east as Harrisburg. Said NARP, "There is some doubt about what actually happened during the Superliner test into Philadelphia [in late August]. Amtrak had said the car did not fit under the catenary in the station, but others saw the car well within the station. Amtrak should consider running a Superliner section of the CAPITOL LIMITED into Philadelphia".....

A FURTHER COMMENT on the BROADWAY LTD question comes from Keystone ARP vice president Bob Abraham, writing on the op-ed page of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Sep 6): "Amtrak claims that it will save $17.3 million a year by discontinuing the BROADWAY LTD, and offering substitute service on the THREE RIVERS train. Given that the 460 spaces will be lost each night,and that other trains cannot absorb those spaces due to their near capacity now. KARP estimates that Amtrak will add to its losses, not only from Chicago-NY trains but also from other trains that passengers will be unable to connect to because of the limited capacity on the CAPITOL LIMITED." And a proposed solution: "The THREE RIVERS train can be run in the following manner: Attach the train—coaches and mail cars—to the CAPITOL LTD in Pittsburgh. If this were done, passengers could remain on their train while it is switched to or from the CAPITOL LTD. Since Amtrak is already planning to switch the mail cars, why not the passenger cars? Passengers will wonder why they will have to give up their seats in the middle of the night to transfer trains, while the mail gets preferential treatment.".....

RTN APOLOGIZES FOR the extensive use of this italicized typeface in this issue. This was done because of a typesetting equipment problem we could not resolve without delaying publication of this issue. It will be fixed by next issue.....

AMT RAK PRESIDENT DOWNS held a well-attended press conference in Washington on Sep 12. The conference appeared to be timed to counter a pro-highway, anti-rail rally on the Capitol steps the same day. Congressman Bud Shuster was said to be present at the latter, given by the Highway Users Federation. The following is the text of the press release that Amtrak published after the press conference:

"Based on the current economic forecast that includes a dedicated funding source currently proposed in Senate legislation, Amtak will become independent of federal operating expenditures by 2002, said Thomas M. Downs, President of Amtrak. As recent performance figures indicate, Amtrak continues to exceed ridership, revenue and cost reduction projections. "And we believe that trend will continue," Said Downs.

Recent figures show that passenger revenues and on-time performance have increased over the same period last year despite 18 months of service reductions and streamlining in West Coast, Inter-City and Northeast Corridor operations. Since 1994, Amtrak has pared its management by one-third, reduced its workforce by several thousand positions and trimmed nearly 15% of its passenger train service to close its projected budget gap.

"While we made the cut necessary to ensure Amtrak.s future, the good news is that we have maintained our national system and our customer-focused mission. We are providing safer, more reliable service and we are stronger than ever," said Mr. Downs. He continued, "The 'new' Amtrak is more customer-focused, service-oriented and business-driven. We have made incredible progress in an incredibly short time. We have proven ourselves ready for and worthy of greater capital investment and we will be free of government operating support by 2002."

"Mr. Downs emphasized the importance of legislation pending in the U.S. Senate that would place a ½-cent of the current gasoline tax into a dedicated trust fund to cover Amtrak's capital costs. It would provide a reliable source of continued funding for capital improvements such as trains, tracks, stations and repairs. "A half-cent may sound like small change, but ins ervice impact it is truly impressive," said Mr. Downs. "When it all adds up, it would mean $600 million for Amtak to use in our strategic campaign toward higher quality and self-sufficiency. This dedicated stream of capital would not just enable us to invest in new passengr equipment and planned modernization, it would reinforce our ability to raise funds in the private market."

"Mr. Downs said Amtrak's fiscal success was due in part to new partnerships with state governments that allowed Amtrak to continue service in regions that had faced certain route elimination or service reductions. A series of regional public forums held earlier this year were instrumental in Amtrak.s deicsion to build alliances with state and local governments. "In the course of these forums, it became so clear that Amtrak was critical to communities across the country that eight governors, including Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin, John Engler of Michigan and Howard Dean of Vermont have joined forces with us, providing funds necessary to keep trains running in their states," said Down

"Flexibility in transportation financing makes these partnerships possible, Mr. Downs said. And he urged passage of a pending provision in the National Highway System bill that would allow states to use federal transportation dollars toward maintaining Amtrak service. Today, states can spend this money on any combination of ltransportation services they want—buses, subways, bike paths, airports—except passenger rail service. "This legislation will empower states to spend transportation funds as they see fit—including passenger rail service, if that is what they choose," said Mr. Downs. "We will have to sell the states and regions of the value of our services," he continued.

"Mr. Downs concluded, "The 'new ' Amtrak is moving decisively forward, operating subsidy-free, in partnership with states and maintaining a national rail service that we, and America, can be proud of well into the next centiury".....

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"In many large tracts of rural America, the clock seems to be running backward. Instead of feeling plugged into every more sophisticated transportation systems, communities face increasing isolation. From the Greyhound bus to the Amtak train, services are being slashed or ended. And rural airports are threatened with the demise of government-subsidized air services. Travelers wanting to reach some of America's most remote (and attractive) towns may soon have one choice: a long car ride."

—Michael Wright and Gary Stoller in Conde Nast Traveler, September.

AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

AUGUST 1995 June & July figures appeared in RTN 531

	AUG 1994	AUG 1995	% CHANGE (UNFAV)	
NORTHEAST CORRIDOR SBU				
METROLINERS	146,351	142,662	(2.7)	
(WAS)-NEW HAVEN-MONTREAL	13,320	7,453	(44.0)	A
NEC CONVENTIONALS	480,400	446,120	(7.1)	A, H
(SPG)(RVR)WAS-PHL-ATLANTIC CITY	22,817		(100.0)	
NEW YORK-PHILADELPHIA	150,194	165,555	10.2	I
NYC-PHILADELPHIA-HARRISBURG	52,615	59,226	12.6	G
NEW YORK-ALBANY-NIAGARA FALLS	104,766	100,675	(3.9)	B
(NEW YORK)-ALBANY-MONTREAL	10,419	14,248	36.8	D
NEW YORK-NEWPORT NEWS	41,284	50,403	22.1	H
SPECIAL TRAINS		1,798	100.0	
TOTAL NORTHEAST CORRIDOR SBU	1,022,166	987,940	(3.3)	
INTERCITY SBU				
NYP-COLUMBIA-MIAMI/TAMPA	34,433	35,923	4.3	
NYP-CHARLESTON-MIAMI/TAMPA	36,406	36,940	1.5	
NEW YORK-PHL-CHICAGO	15,758	15,990	1.5	
NEW YORK-WASHINGTON-CHICAGO	10,399	11,043	6.2	
CHICAGO-SPRINGFIELD-ST.LOUIS	27,349	25,572	(6.5)	C
CHICAGO-MILWAUKEE	27,920	32,227	15.4	
CHICAGO-DETROIT-PONTIAC/TOLEDO	38,758	34,440	(11.1)	
CHICAGO-CARBONDALE	8,536	7,446	(12.8)	
CHICAGO-QUINCY	7,215	6,900	(4.4)	
CHICAGO-SEATTLE/PORTLAND	42,222	35,429	(16.1)	K
CHICAGO-WASHINGTON	16,734	19,828	18.5	
CHICAGO-SALT LAKE CITY-OAKLAND	52,881	48,912	(7.5)	E,L
CHICAGO-LOS ANGELES	24,426	27,330	11.9	
CHICAGO-NEW ORLEANS	19,574	14,122	(27.9)	
(CHI)-ST LOUIS-MOS/SAS-(LAX)	12,156	11,757	(3.3)	
MIAMI-MOL-SAS-LOS ANGELES	13,766	13,910	1.0	
CHICAGO-PORT HURON	13,173	12,632	(4.1)	
CHICAGO-NEW YORK/BOSTON	32,466	35,832	10.4	
NEW YORK-JACKSONVILLE	15,426		(100.0)	H,J
NEW YORK-NEW ORLEANS/MOBILE	27,566	24,158	(12.4)	F
CHICAGO-INDIANAPOLIS	5,581	2,164	(61.2)	
KANSAS CITY-ST LOUIS-(CHICAGO)	19,028	12,626	(33.6)	
PITTSBURGH-PHILADELPHIA-(NYP)	15,655	19,957	27.5	I
AUTO-TRAIN	22,794	27,855	22.2	
CHICAGO-GRAND RAPIDS	6,859	2,881	(58.0)	
(NYP)-WASHINGTON-RMT-CHARLOTTE	20,152	40,724	102.1	H
RALEIGH-CHARLOTTE		2,621	100.0	
SPECIAL TRAINS		1,000	100.0	
TOTAL INTERCITY SBU	567,233	560,219	(1.2)	
WESTERN SBU				
LOS ANGELES-SEATTLE	44,134	47,290	7.2	
SANTA BARBARA-LAX-SAN DIEGO	164,069	158,706	(3.3)	
SEATTLE-PORTLAND-EUGENE	20,321	33,401	64.4	
SAN JOSE-ROSEVILLE	34,717	34,704	.0	
OAKLAND-BAKERSFIELD	53,590	54,484	1.7	
SPECIAL TRAINS		240	100.0	
TOTAL WESTERN SBU	316,831	328,825	3.8	
SYSTEM TOTAL	1,906,230	1,876,984	(1.5)	

FOOTNOTES: (A) The NE Corridor conventional route includes the local NEC riders (WAS-NHV) on the Wash.-Montreal route. (B) NY-Niagara Falls (Toronto) includes local NY-Albany riders on the NY-Montreal route. (C) Chicago-St. Louis includes local Chicago-St. Louis riders on the Chicago-St. Louis-Kansas City and Chicago-Texas routes. (D) NY-Albany riders are reported in NY-Niagara Falls (Toronto) route. (E) For reporting purposes, all ridership on the Chicago-Oakland, Chicago-Salt Lake City (SLC)-Seattle, Chicago-SLC-Los Angeles trains are combined. (F) NY-New Orleans route includes Birmingham-Mobile riders. (G) NY-Philadelphia-Harrisburg includes 15,770 riders for the trains operated for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. (H) Before Oct 1994, the NEC conventional route included local riders on the NY-Jacksonville, Boston-Newport News & NY-Charlottes routes. (I) Before Oct 1994, NY-Philadelphia route included local riders on the Pittsburgh-Philadelphia-(NYP) route. (J) NY-Jacksonville-Tampa route discontinued effective Feb 1,'95. (K) Chicago-Minneapolis/St. Paul segment operated daily and Chicago-Seattle/Portland segment operated four times per week west of Minneapolis/St. Paul effective Feb 1,'95. (L) Effective Feb 1, '95, Chicago-SLC-L.A. operated three times per week and Chicago-SLC-Emeryville continued daily operations [until 6-11-95 when it became quad-weekly.—Ed.]. (M) (SPG) (RVR)-WAS-PHL-Atlantic City route discontinued effective Apr 2, 1995.

Note that system ridership was down 1.5% in August; NE Corridor was down 3.3%, Intercity SBU down 1.2%, and Western SBU up 3.8%. Most of that increase was in the Pacific NW with its new trains & equipment. The enhanced STARLIGHT was up 7.2%.

MIDWEST REPORT

A Chicago Metra bilevel electric commuter train pauses at the Roosevelt Road station on the Illinois Central Railroad in downtown Chicago on Mar 24. This service was previously operated by the IC, and the ex-IC bilevel equipment has been acquired by Metra. Photo by Alex Mayes.

METRA WILL INAUGURATE a new commuter line some time in the future, to run between Antioch (near the Wisconsin border) and Franklin Park, with stations at Lake Villa Round Lake Beach, Libertyville, Mundelein Vernon Hills, Prairie View, Buffalo Grove, Wheeling, Prospect Heights and O'Hare Airport. The airport stop will be to discharge passengers only. The plan got the go-ahead Aug 25 with the signing of a contract with Wisconsin Central RR. The railroad will receive $2.5 million a year from Metra for use of the tracks, plus incentive payments for on-time performance. It will be the first new commuter line for the Chicago area in almost fifty years. Morning service will be three trains to Chicago, there will be a round trip in the afternoon, and three northbound trains will run at evening commute time. Metra said that if demand requires more than eight trains a day, a second track would have to be built. Service should start as soon as parking lots at suburban stations are completed.

AMTRAK IS CHANGING crew bases for the CAPITOL LTD, nos. 29 & 30. The crew will run Chicago-Pittsburgh, oay over one day and return. Running time is about 9½ hrs. This means 10 hours on duty. If the train is delayed, it is probable the 12-hour rule will go into effect before Pittsburgh. Amtrak wants to qualify all the Pittsburgh-Washington DC crews west to Alliance OH. Then if the crew is going to outlaw, the Pittsburgh crew can go on duty in Alliance OH. Crew for the LAKE SHORE, nos. 48 & 49, will be based in Toledo. One job: Toledo-Chicago round trip in same day. Other job: Toledo to Cleveland, lay over 27 hrs, then Cleveland -Toledo. Amtrak is reportedly talking about conductors on in Toledo but engineers on in Waterloo IN, to Cleveland.

RAIL FANTRIPS

Sep 30 & Oct 1: Fall Picnicker. Two 1-day fall color trips from Howell & Durand to Cadillac MI, picnic in park (lunch incl) & optional side rail trip to state's largest sand mine at Yuma. On T&SB Rwy. $69. Bluewater Chap NRHS, Box 296, Royal Oak MI 48068. 800-594-5162.

Oct 13 (Friday): Mystery train & bus dinner excursion; interstate train & bus & full-course dinner. $36 adult, $29 child 11 & under. Lv Amtrak station, 550 So 16th St at 5:30pm, return 9:30. Real American Experiences, 4351 Holly Hills Blvd, St. Louis MO 63116. 752-3148.

Oct 14: Steam train excur. & fall crafts festival. Bus St Louis-Frohna MO; country crafts at *Frohna Fair. Excur. on "Iron Mountain" Rwy, steam loco 5. Bus return. $54.* *Real American Experiences, 4351 Holly Hills Blvd, St Louis MO 63116.*

Oct 29: Inaugural Amtrak train to Washington MO; from St Louis or Kirkwood; first time scheduled. Lv 8am, back 1:45pm. Walking tour historic Washington; brunch. $39. Amer. Ass'n of Railroaders Inc, 4351 Holly Hills Blvd, St Louis MO 63116-2255.

Oct 14: Fall Excur. to Harpers Ferry Ntl Hist'l Park. From Richmond, Ashland or Fredericksburg; a.m. Atk train to Alexandria, bus to Park (WV). 5 hrs in park, return same way. $65. Old Dominion Chap, NRHS, Box 8583, Richmond VA 23226. 800-451-6318.

Oct 14: Fall Foliage Excur Train & Hudson R. Cruise. Lv Boston So. Sta. 7:50am, ar Springfield 10:10 on charter train. Runs W from Springfield thru Berkshires summit to Albany NY. 2-hr cruise. $55. Mass. Bay RRE, Box 4245-BV, Andover MA 01810-0814.

PITTSBURGH'S INCLINE RAILWAYS (continued from page 15)

needed. Port Authority transit somehow managed to scrape up the funds and in 1982-83 it was extensively rebuilt and will be in excellent shape for the next 50 years.

Pittsburgh's new light rail line has a stop at Station Square, which adjoins the base station. The fare is one dollar. Station Square is an entertainment complex housed in the historic P&LE station which no longer has any passenger trains. (The final run, a commuter schedule to College PA, ceased about 10 years ago. Until 1971, long-distance trains of the B&O Railroad also stopped here.)

THE DUQUESNE INCLINE

Pittsburgh's other surviving funicular is the Duquesne Incline, which dates from 1877. The designer and builder was Samuel Diescher, America's foremost builder of incline railways. Born in Budapest, Hungary, of German parents, he came to America in 1866. Besides building incline railways, he was later involved in streetcar and interurban projects. He died in 1915.

The incline's surviving vehicles continue to be used, complete with clerestory roofs, hand-carved cherry panels, maple trim, amber glass transoms and various metallic fixtures. Likewise it base and summit stations are true examples of high Victorian architecture. Unlike its neighbor, the Monongahela, the Duquesne Incline never had an adjoining freight section. However, during the 1930s it too was converted from steam to cleaner, more economical electric power purchased commercially. Its base station in the early years received passengers from riverboats and subsequently trolley cars. Factories along the Monongahela's bank also produced considerable patronage.

In 1963 this funicular almost ceased operations due to dwindling traffic and escalating expenses which could no longer be met thru the farebox. For various reasons the local transit authority wasn't interested in taking it over, so the end appeared inevitable. However, at the eleventh hour a number of civic-minded residents formed an organization called the Society for the Preservation of the Duquesne Heights Incline. Using their own funds plus some government monies and outside contributions, they managed to keep the line open.

In 1982 it was given a top-to-bottom overhaul which should insure its operation into the next century. During the reconstruction one of the goals was historical accuracy —everything had to remain as it was in 1877. In short, Victorian ambiance was maintained. The last thing anyone wanted was a glitzy new funicular built by some Swiss company out of stainless steel, aluminum and formica.

A ride on the Duquesne Incline is truly a journey back into time. Its brick base station is still heated by a pot-bellied coal stove. Its summit station contains a mini-museum describing the line and also some of Pittsburgh's abandoned inclines. In addition, there are pictures of many of the world's presently operating funiculars. Some appear to be modern, while others have traditional-looking cars and stations. There is also a gift shop selling postcards, books, T-shirts and other items. A fare of one dollar is charged, and a sign informs visitors that this amount does not cover the full cost of maintaining the operation. Contributions are actively solicited.

It's possible to begin a trip by riding up the Duquesne Incline to the summit, where one has an unsurpassed view of downtown Pittsburgh plus the Golden Trianble where the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers meet to form the Ohio which travels 900 miles to meet the Mississippi at Cairo IL. By walking along Grandview Avenue for about half a mile, you reach the summit station of the Monongahela Incline, which will take you to Station Square. The walk is pleasant and the neighborhood safe. Until the 1960s there was a streetcar operating along this portion of Grandview Avenue, allowing a person to make an all-rail circuit.

CONCLUSION

Pittsburgh's tow remaining inclines represent survivors from a bygone era of urban public transit. If you decide to come to this city to ride them, there is also a light rail system running from downtown to the South Hills district. Built mainly on the alignments of former trolley lines, it's interesting, but unfortunately serves only a small portion of the city and its metro area. Presently, one route is closed due to deteriorating infrastructure. Duewag LRVs are used, plus about 15 PCCs, the sole remnants of a fleet which was once America's largest with about 600 of the streamlined vehicles.

Commuter rail no longer operates in Pittsburgh, but until the 1960s the Pennsylvania, Baltimore & Ohio and P&LE Railroads ran considerable service. The PRR eliminated its trains in 1966 and the others were gone by the late 1980s. They could have been retained and upgraded, but local officials preferred to keep building roads while neglecting the rail mode. The result is rush-hour highway congestion and suburban sprawl which pose a threat to the viability of the downtown central business district. There is some discussion of expansion of the light rail network using abandoned railroad tracks. Unfortunately, many politicians seem to want busways rather than rail routes.

For those living in the NY-New Jersey-Philadelphia metropolitan areas, a nice way of getting to Pittsburgh is on Amtrak.s day train the PENNSYLVANIAN which takes about nine hours to make the trip. The journey over the former Pennsylvania.RR main line via Horseshoe Curve is interesting and the train appears to be attracting sufficient patronage to justify its state subsidy under the 403-b clause.

THE VERMONTER (continued from page 3)

We walked down the hill to the ferry dock and had a sunset ride across the lake. This is always a great ride. Back in the early 1970s I lived near Port Kent and had many nice ferry rides, including one on a very windy day when the lake had waves! Now that trip was an adventure.

In Burlington we were met by vans that took us to our hotel, but not before we had to stop at the Vermont Railway crossing as the last Sugarbush Vermont Express arrived from Middlebury. This was a preview of coming attractions, as we were booked on the train the following day.

Sunday, Sep 3 was another picture-perfect day. Our vans failed to show at the appointed time, so phone calls were made. With time getting really tight, some of the group piled into the hotel van and raced to the train. Our vans finally showed and we raced down to the old Rutland Railway station. Whew! We made it!

We left Burlington at 9:05am, five minutes late. The cars have been re-lettered for the Sugarbush Vermont Express, but are pulled by a Vermont Railway locomotive. In the vestibules the cars retain their Sunday River Bullet Express Ski Train logo, and come winter they will be back in Maine on the ski train.

At Shelburne, a small station has been built, and a Chittenden County "trolley" with rubber tires meets all trains and provides free shuttle service to the Shelburne Museum and Vermont Teddy Bear Factory, as well as a shopping district that are all close by. We stayed on the train.

Seating in most cars was "dining car" table seating with individual chairs. The ride was very pretty, and there were occasional glimpses of Lake Champlain. The next stop for the train was Vergennes. We left there 11mins late. A small "telephone booth" shelter marks the stop.

The Middlebury station is south of the old Rutland station. Here they have built a large shelter and a wooden high-level platform. Although it is fairly long, detraining was done at only one door. They have a small bridge plate with railings to bridge the large gap from train to platform. We arrived here 10mins late at 10:25am. Everyone was told to detrain, and the train ran north a ways, where the engine runs around. Then the train backed down to the station and boarded passengers for the run back to Burlington. The train fare is a very reasonable $8.00 and is good all day.

We left Middlebury at 10:45, 10mins late. We detrained at Shelburne about 12mins late and boarded the "trolley" for the Museum. First order of business was a "rest stop" and then a snack. Then off to see the railroad exhibit "Ticonderoga" ferry, Colchester Reef lighthouse, two-lane covered bridge and more. I was worn out when it was "trolley" to the train time, so I knew I had had a good time.

We boarded the train at 3:45pm, 20mins late for the ride back to Burlington. The train stopped in the yards, where the engine ran around the train and the train was pushed into the station, where our vans met us for the trip back to our hotel.

We saw two "trolleys" on College Street which provide a free shuttle service between the lake and University of Vermont campus between 11am and 9pm.

After changing for dinner, we were vanned back downtown to the Ice House Restaurant in a historic old building for a belt-stretching meal. While there, we were treated to the arrival of the last Sugarbush train of the day.

Monday, Labor Day, it was back to New York, but this time it was via train 55, the VERMONTER. The train arrived at Essex Junction a few minutes late and 58 passengers were boarded through one door! "Railroad group first." We were boarded at the hind end of the third car, then had to walk through the cafe car and into the next car. We were spread throughout the car and the conductor had a small fit when he saw this. He insisted we all sit together and double up. This was rather annoying, and I was not about to give up my window seat and didn't. After tickets were collected, there were announcements several times that the train would be full and not to change seats. What he didn't know didn't hurt, and I saw plenty of seat changing. As long as you move the seat check, how was the conductor to know?

Note: When we walked through the cafe car just 30 minutes after the train had begun its run in St. Albans, we were greeted by the wonderful smell of brewed coffee. The cafe was open! Now this is the way to do it! On the platform, the baggage cart had one checked bag to New York, and I learned later that some bicycles were loaded into the baggage car at St. Albans.

Compared to the Metroliner Service Amfleet, these regular Amfleet cars were rather cramped and there was plenty of luggage filling the overhead racks.

We were 13mins late leaving Amherst, but 13mins early arriving Springfield. They allow plenty of time for the Palmer and Springfield maneuvers. We crawled into Palmer and soon were running "backward", cab car first on the B&A. We passed train 448, the LAKE SHORE LIMITED at 2:52pm, which would make him right on time

At Springfield we stopped on the B&A, then ran cab car first around the Y and onto the B&M. After clearing the signal, we moved forward and ran south across the B&A diamond and stopped under the Memorial Bridge. At the Sweeney building we saw one MHC at the mail facility that has been built there. We then backed up into the Springfield station. All of these moves at Palmer and Springfield were explained by the conductor on the P.A. We were all well-informed and he was even careful to assure everyone that the backwards running for 19 miles between Palmer and Springfield was normal and perfectly safe.

Having once lived in Springfield and not visited there for several years, I was delighted to see the new track level station and also to see how the whole track area has been cleaned up of old tracks, junk and weeds, some as big as a small tree.

For many it was a photo, rest, stretch or smoke stop. There were three other trainsets sitting in the station, so the place was pretty full. We never saw train 56, so he must have been hiding up on the B&M or snuck by on the other side of the stored trains.

We left Springfield at 3:45pm on time and made all stops to New Haven, where we arrived on track 9 at 5:20pm, 10mins late. Train 175 had not yet arrived on track 7. To save time, the F40 was removed from train 55 and two AEM7s with the outbound engineer were attached, then train 175 arrived about 8mins late. The F40 off train 55 doubled to the head end of the train, and train 175 departed 8mins late. I live in New Haven, so I bailed out here. It was a great three-day weekend and we had perfect weather throughout.

The train continued south and at New Rochelle it was 14mins late, but arrived New York Penn Station only 2mins late. The train departed there 5mins late and continued on to Washington, arriving there 35mins late.

I should add that the VERMONTER has a special box lunch. On the top of the large "Kleenex box" that contains the lunch is the VERMONTER sticker logo. On the side, another sticker reads: "The VERMONTER, featuring Lilydale Bakery French Roll, McKenzie Raspberry Turkey, Vermont Honey Mayonnaise, Miguel's Tortilla Chips, Joan & Annie's Chocolate Chunk Brownie."

The sandwich is very tasty. The mayo came in a small container and one person I talked to said he folded the piece of lettuce that the sandwich sat on and used it to spread the mayo. Also included were two black olives and one green olive with pimiento.

Long live the VERMONTER!

CARS & CONSISTS

*SILVER METEOR, train 97, NY-Miami Aug 8: engines 948 & 951 (AEM7s, off at Washington), 323 & 341 (F40s, on at Wash.); cars 1223 baggage, 2903 crew dorm, Amcoaches 25105, 25049, 25025, 25011 & 25040, lounge 3123 "General Lafayette", diner 8512, all-bdrm slpr 2235, slpr 2462 "Silver Chasm", slpr 2447 "Sycamore Grove", Slumbercoach 2085 "Silver Slumber."—Wayne Middleton.

*HOOSIER STATE, train 315, Crawfordsville IN Aug 25: engines 297, 349, 313, 200 & 343 (F40s); cars Superliners 38000 diner & 31028 coach-baggage, baggage 1216, MHC 1522, Horizon cars 54066, 54054 & 54511. Last 3 cars were revenue cars for HOOSIER STATE. Train late because it rescued a hospital train of Amtrak cars sent up earlier that morning to Chicago that broke down near Roselawn IN. Train 80mins late.

*CAPITOL LIMITED, train 29, South Bend IN Aug 30: engines 340 & 287 (F40s); cars 1421 & 1508 MHCs, 1249 baggage, Superliner II transition dorm-sleeper 39000, Superliners 34010 coach, 31001 coach-baggage, 34094 coach, Superliner IIs 33039 lounge, 38066 diner, 32099 "New Mexico" sleeper, 32115 "Washington" sleeper, private car "Georgia", private car "Silver Pelican" 2222 in Amtrak stripes (ex-DENVER ZEPHYR car built 1956 as 6-bdrm, 5-compt car), private car "Hollywood Beach" (ex-Seaboard SILVER METEOR car with special sun room end), private car "L&N Ohio River" 364. Train about 5mins late.
Same, train 30, Elkhart IN Aug 29: engines 399 & 321 (F40s); cars 1520, 1514 & 1543 MHCs, 1203 baggage, Superliner II transition dorm-sleeper 39012, Superliners 34042, 34084 & 34091 coaches, Superliner II lounge 33049, Superliner diner 38000, Superliner II sleepers 32102 "North Dakota" & 32105 "Oregon."Train about 20mins late.

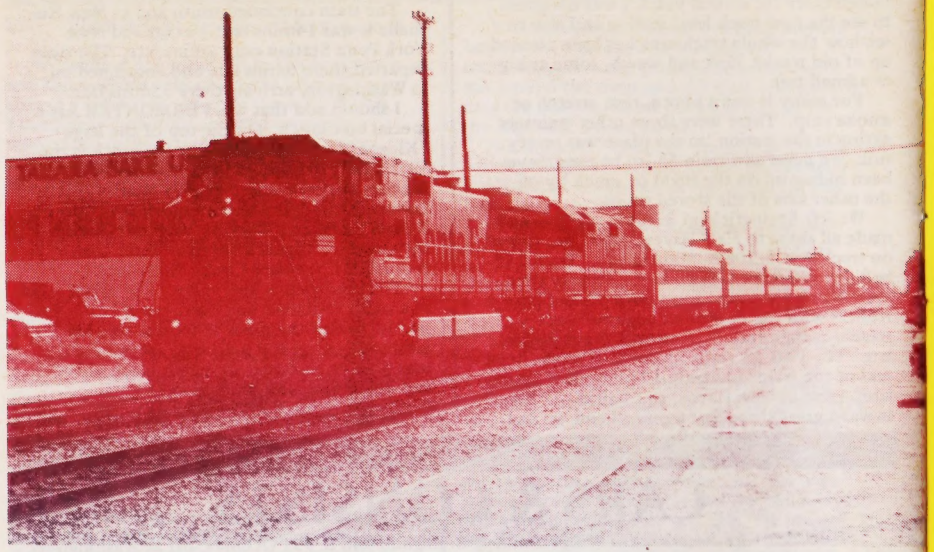
*LAKE SHORE LIMITED, train 48, Elkhart IN Aug 29: engines 385 & 387 (F40s); cars 1507 & 1557 MHCs, 1211 baggage, sleeper 2884 "Pacific Slope", coaches 4723, 4636, 4002 & 4015, Amfleet II dinette-lounge 28016, diner 8513, Amfleet II coach 25077, coaches 4619 & 4616, sleepers 2983 "Pine Arroyo", 2924 "Pacific Patrol" & 2438 "Pacific Castle", bag-dorm 1616. 10mins late. -Rick Davis.

*Lorain & West Virginia Excursion Railroad train, Wellington OH, July 30: engine 123 (RS-3); cars 62 MRHF coach (built 1934), 1 MRHF coach "Mount Baxter" (built 1924), 900293 C&O caboose, C-2423 B&O caboose.

*BROADWAY LIMITED, train 40, Fostoria OH Aug 6: engines 326 & 247; cars 1445, 1514, 1459, 1471 & 1569 MHCs, 1236 baggage, Slumbercoach 2050 "Monroe Harbor", slpr 2435 "Pacific Meadow", diner 8501 "Silver Tureen", lounge 28000, coaches 26036, 25010, 25069 & 4637. Same, train 41: engines 381 & 216 (F40s); cars 1505, 1442, 1519, 1537 & 1416 MHCs, baggage 1209, Slumbercoach 2051 "Fairport Harbor", slpr 2432 "Pacific Waves", diner 8507, lounge 28009, coaches 25027, 25115 & 25015. —George Danchisen.

*MOHAWK train 281 combined with ADIRONDACK 69, Albany NY Sep 2: engine 702 brand new AMD110 off at Albany, coaches 21036, 21092, 21141, cafe 20052, coaches 21106, 44980, 44967, dinette 20238, coaches 21925 & 44903. Train was split between cars 21106 & 44980. F40 319 took head cars as train 281, while F40 242 took rear cars as train 69. 44900 series cars are Metroliner Service cars. Train 69/68 regularly gets these roomy cars.

*VERMONTER, train 55, New Haven Sep 4: engine 413 (F40); cars 1801 baggage, coaches 44270, 44199 , dinette 48223, coach 44201, cab control coach 9645. Train sold out.—Bob Underwood.



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—Editor Jim Russell in RTN 115 (September 1975).

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